

The air travel gods or Saint Somebody were with me for my trip to Haiti. I took a total of 6 airplanes during my travels and each was reasonably on time. Only one of the little planes I took while in Haiti had a lot of turbulence.

We started off for Riviere Froide from the Port au Prince airport. I always read the graffiti written on the walls and see what the ti machen (little merchant) are selling while driving through Port au Prince. Since the traffic in town is usually terrible, I have ample time to do this. Reading my “wall newspaper” it seems that many people who are not of the upper class are not very happy with Jovenel Moise, the president. He spent much government money to have Carnival celebrations in about 7 places in Haiti. Those who are hungry, have no job, can’t afford to attend school, or are sick, are not happy with this decision. This is of course the vast majority in Haiti.

Now for my informal agriculture report: The last time I was in Haiti in July, I saw very little fruit being sold by the side of the roads. That was due to the hurricane damage. This time I saw oranges, limes, veritab (I think this is bread fruit), bananas, and papaya for sale. I surmise they are from trees that were damaged but not up-rooted. It will be many years before new trees planted can mature. Banana trees are an exception as they take only about one year to mature, grow a big stalk of fruit, and then they die. A new tree then starts this process again, coming up from the roots.

This process of disaster/recovery is a continuing condition. I am inspired by the Haitians resilience. It is a bit sad for me though that it seems they expect disasters as a part of their norm.

In the afternoon on my first day in Haiti, I went down to the school and got to teach a 6th grade science class on plants and two English classes for 7th and 8th graders. What great fun we had!

This time of year is the dry season in Haiti. They are all praying for rain soon. To compound matters, a cistern at Riviere Froide was badly damaged by the roots of a huge mango tree. Their water is almost gone.

One day, I went to see Sr. Jeanne at Pelerin II. We have been good buddies for many years. She has been diagnosed with Hepatitis B – acute. It has probably been in her body for years since she had an operation when she was young. She is very

weak but trying to do her best. Her palms and soles of her feet are rather yellow. They are doing everything they can which includes: 2 trips to Cuba for medical care, using standard medicines for her enlarged liver, and using other natural cures. The sisters have hung yellow curtains in her room as in the Haitian culture they believe that the color yellow helps the liver. I brought her some antacid to try to ease her stomach pain. I don’t care what works – I just want her to get better.

One day while driving through Carrefour, I noticed that the students were waiting to enter a school. There were ti machen selling food and several shoe-shiners. Ironed clothes and shined shoes are important in Haiti. Sometimes I feel like a slob in comparison. Accomplishing these two things with mostly no electricity and dusty roads is amazing.

Traffic in Port au Prince is almost always challenging but we sat for 3 hours one evening due to a manifestation (demonstration). The people were demanding that they have a hospital. I told our driver that I was happy to wait if it meant that these people would have better health care. Luckily, there was no violence at this demonstration. I told the Sisters that many of us are demonstrating these days in the US. They looked very worried until I assured them that there was no rock throwing, burning of tires, or gunfire at these demonstrations.

If we were the first truck down the mountain in the morning we took the 2 policemen back to their station. We have them up at Riviere Froide at night for security. Usually there would be road-blocks as TapTaps (pickup trucks with a roof on the back with benches) would be blocking the rutted rocky road getting as many passengers crammed in as possible. The police would get out and help move things along. Our waits were in minutes rather than hours thanks to them.

More motorcycles appeared in Haiti after the earthquake. I noticed that many put big horns on them. Now, many cars, trucks, and motorcycles have sirens like police and ambulances to help get them through traffic. Of course this means that no one believes in sirens now.

I had to go up to see the progress at the Little Sister's new farm way up north in Fort Liberte so that I could report back to the foundation that gave them a grant. If I used a car it would have taken close to 10+ hrs. I took a little plane and it was only a 25 minute ride.



It was thrilling to see what they have accomplished. They have large gardens established; an irrigation system; beef, pigs, and chickens; fruit trees; 3 little houses 1 each for the Sisters, the workers, and a guard to live in; a little primary school; and about ½ of a wall completed around the property to keep out robber goats who come in and eat the garden. It is our hope that this mission will be self-sufficient and be able to provide much needed food. I was happy to see that some of the trees that Loretto helped start about 3 years ago are now bearing fruit.

I also went to Ti Riviere where the Little Sisters have an orphanage with 53 little girls. A Haitian woman who lives in the U S has been helping them but now is unable to continue with the non-profit she started due to health. She asked me to help her send money from her family. The story is that her grandmother gave the land to a man who founded the orphanage many years ago. It was then taken over by the Little Sisters. I of course said yes.

Since beginning my Haitian journey 18 years ago I have found so many very good people like this woman on this earth. We don't seem to hear about them often but rather hear about the minority of people who haven't yet learned to respect and care for other.

Sr. Julienne came with us to Ti Riviere. She told me that when she was a little girl she lived at this orphanage. I visited them on Saturday but by the time we got there they had finished their washing. The girls were more animated than I remembered from my last visit there. I asked if they had toys and they said no so I taught them a game with rocks. They caught on quickly and then taught me some rock games they knew. We had great fun. It is wonderful to watch these girls help each other. Two of the oldest girls who have finished secondary school are now learning to be teachers.

One night Sr. Jeanne Gardin made casav (kind of like a flat bread) made from the root of manioc (which she grew). You peel the root, pound

it, form it into a large circle, and cook it on a griddle. Boy was that good!!!



The next day Sr. Leandra shared a huge red papaya she grew with everyone at the motherhouse. They were both so proud of their accomplishments.



I checked in on a project we started several years ago. A few Congregations here in the US and a Foundation have given money to help with the education of the young Sisters. Several are now principals, others are the directors of Professional Schools, and one is completing her studies and working in agriculture and production. They are studying and working hard.

Those of you who have been receiving this Journal for some time might remember me telling you about Kenley, a young boy who was born with Downs Syndrome. He was attending school at the Handicapped Orphanage. He had a friend in the US, Jeffrey, who was a former student of mine also with Downs Syndrome. When Kenley's mother and brother found out that Jeff was able to talk, read, write, and play music, they were encouraged to work with him even more.

I saw his mother and she told me that he died. She said he was sick and she took him to a hospital. The doctors took Kenley into a room and later came out and told her that he had died. I'm not sure, but it might have been his heart as that is often the case with children born with this syndrome. He had learned to sit calmly for up to 30 minutes, was still learning to speak, had a wonderful smile, and gave great hugs. Kenley looked like he was about 8 years old, but he was actually 15. It is really remarkable that he lived this long in a country like Haiti. We are so fortunate to have had him as long as we did. I assured Kenley's mother that we would still try to help her with the brother's scholarship, food, and to fix her house.



The first thing I learned after returning to the US was that Stephen Hawking had died. I immediately had a picture in my head of Kenley and Stephen sitting and having a conversation. Both were enjoying each other's company and neither with any of their earthly constraints.

Kasimy, the young man who has no parents and sleeps in the school has entered university to become a nurse. He and Claudia (another scholarship student) leave Riviere Froide each morning at 4:00 AM for school.

The first student from the handicapped program will be ready to begin university next school year. We need to find a place for her to stay close by and will work on this.

A young man who helps with a choir of about 30 young people ages 5 to 30 yrs., came to me and said he would like to go to music school. We will try to find a way to give him a scholarship and see if we can find a keyboard, drums, and rhythm instruments for this group.

Most of our scholarship students that I was able to check in with are doing well. There are also many people struggling to make repairs on their houses damaged in the earthquake in 2010.

Andresaint, the man I told you about last time who had a severe leg injury when he was hit by a car, still has his leg. The bones are healing slowly.

These are some of the things we will continue to find ways to help:

- Scholarships for students
- Food for Sisters and peasants
- Medical care and medicine for Sisters and peasants
- Keyboard and rhythm instruments for choir
- Skirts and blouses for orphans
- Food, diapers, and money to pay the employees at the handicapped orphans
- Funds to start little furniture factory at the Professional School.
- Repair earthquake damage from peasants' houses
- Hole punch for leather (I think) I have a photo of it
- Laptops for university students
- Funds to continue to pay for doctor visits for:
 - Vaval – boy with heart condition
 - Jean Roni – boy with eye condition
 - Andresaint – man with leg injury
- Continue salary for our computer technician

My sincere thanks to all of you for your continued interest in Haiti. It means a great deal to the Haitians to know that people like you in the U S respect and care about them. Please know that all of the students, peasants, handicapped children, artists, and the Little Sisters pray for you each and every day.

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